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nominal form of the verb *lagh*, "to marry," literally "to take." The two phrases thus mean:

(*a*) *vene na woroan*, "women of (a man's) own *woroan*";
(*b*) *vene na laghean*, "women we marry."

The explanation was that *vene na woroan* referred to women "born in the village," and *vene na laghean* referred to women married into it. The *vene na woroan* are particularly active during the mortuary rites (see Chapter XXI), when these women, who have all necessarily married into other villages, return to the village of their birth and join in a very intimate way in the ritual that takes place inside the dead man's lodge. Taken at their face value, therefore, the two phrases *vene na woroan* and *vene na laghean* would appear to be applied respectively to the women belonging to two opposed patrilineal groups.

Yet another informant told me on one occasion that the word *woroan* was applied also to three generation groups in the male line, in which

(*a*) all persons of a man's own group are called *woroan naghak*, "my *woroan*";
(*b*) all those of his children's generation group are called *woroan natuk* or *natuk woroan*, both meaning "my child's *woroan*"; and
(*c*) those of his father's generation are called *tete woroan*, "my father's *woroan*."

These groups spread, like the "lines," beyond the confines of Vao, causing, among other things, my Vao informant Ma-taru to refer to one of my Atchin informants named Mari as belonging to his (Ma-taru's) "child's *woroan*," in spite of the fact that, if anything, Mari was the elder.

As none of these statements were subsequently checked, I do not propose to use this word in the analysis of the kinship terms undertaken in this chapter.[1]

RULES OF AVOIDANCE

Younger brother's wife, son's wife and wife's parents.

We have seen on p. 128 that in Vao brothers are not all grouped together, but are divided into elder (*toghak*) and younger (*tehik*). This feature is common to all the Small Island systems, and with it goes the rule that a man may not marry his deceased younger brother's wife (*ne-netun tehik*). This prohibition is enforced by strict rules of avoidance, of

[1] Information on this point would be particularly welcome from any resident in the Islands whom this book may reach, and who has made himself familiar with the facts set out in this and the foregoing chapters.

Codefroy (1, 1933, pp. 42, 43) also mentions a term *hombombok*, which I did not record, and which he describes as being used by the members of a clan for one another, and which he translates "my relative," "my cousin." He does not know its etymology, and uses the term to translate the word "neighbour."

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which the chief is that a man and his younger brother's wife may not speak to one another, and if they meet on the road she has to turn aside to let him pass. - This rule is part of the price paid by the elder brother for his superior position in a society in which primogeniture plays an important rôle, as, failing some such regulation, he might be tempted to exert his authority in a manner that would damage the solidarity of the clan. On the other hand, when the elder brother dies, his wife normally falls to the lot of the younger brother, who takes her in marriage and adopts the rôle of father towards his brother's children. This is one of the most frequent causes of polygamous marriage, and owing to this there are no rules of avoidance between a man and his elder brother's wife, even during the elder brother's lifetime.

In the same way, a man may not speak to his son's wife (*vinguk*), and if the two meet, the woman must make way for and turn her back on her husband's father lest they should view one another from too close. A somewhat similar prohibition exists also with respect to a man and his wife's mother (*pelegak*), to whom he may neither speak, nor mention her name, nor go behind her back. These two elementary restrictions are not based on the same propinquity of dwelling as is the case with a man and his younger brother's wife, and appear rather to be due to the fact that in a 4-section system of kinship, which, we have seen, forms the basis of all class systems, these two women belong to the two sections (B^1 and A^2, see Fig. 20) into which, together with his own, he may not marry.

In the rules governing a man's behaviour to his wife's mother there is also another element, namely that of respect, which he shows also to his wife's father (also called *pelegak*), whose superior position is seen in the fact that, though the two may speak, the daughter's husband may not mention his wife's father's name nor go behind his back, and in this way treats him in the same way as he treats his wife's mother.

2

IMPLICATIONS OF THE VAO KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

THE 4-SECTION ELEMENT

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If now we examine the kinship terminology, we find clear evidence of the existence of a class system in the large number of terminological equivalences caused by the grouping together of persons belonging to the same marriage section. Of these the simplest are:

(*a*) *tahuk*, used by a man for his WB and SisH;
(*b*) *ravak*, used by a woman for her HSis and BW;
(*c*) *soguk*, used for the MB and FSisH.

These three equivalences are common to all class systems owing to the custom of sister-exchange marriage.

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a divorce will be arranged, and Meltek, having paid an agreed sum in pigs, finds himself 'at the head' of a second wife." [1] 586

(3) *She runs home to her own people.*

The most usual solution of marital troubles between young people is for the young wife to run home repeatedly to her own people, resulting, if she persists, in divorce, though sometimes even this may lead to fighting, as seen on p. 613.

DIFFICULTIES WITH OVER-GRASPING PARENTS-IN-LAW

In addition to the motives for divorce stated above there is another, from the husband's side, namely the burden of unreasonable or over-grasping parents-in-law. One of the everlasting complaints of all Small Island natives is the permanent state of indebtedness in which a man stands towards his wife's parents. He not only pays them a huge sum in pigs and mats as bride-price. He also pays for his betrothal, for each child at birth and later to "buy it back" [2] from its maternal relatives. He is, moreover, obliged to present his wife's parents or brother with tusked boars of considerable value at every rite that either he or they perform. This obligation, based on the recognition of matrilineal descent which the existing emphasis on overt patrilineal descent has by no means overcome, is looked on by the natives as one of those galling tricks of fate which it is impossible to escape. The fact that he is assisted, particularly with regard to betrothal and bride-price, by his clansmen is no comfort, since he in turn, when they marry, must assist them. The consequent eternal borrowing of and trading for pigs creates wheels within wheels of indebtedness and the reverse, detailed accounts of which will be given in future volumes. Since pig currency differs from most other forms of currency in that the pig is an animal which may or may not grow longer and longer tusks, and since, however exactly graded, the grades merge into one another by slow growth, the latitude for bargaining and misunderstandings is very great. It thus comes about that the claims of the wife's parents may be just bearable, or they may be so grasping as to make the burden of a man's obligation even more than the best wife is worth. In this case, in order to get rid, not of his wife, but of her people, he may seek a divorce. 586 606

DIVORCE

The procedure for divorce is, theoretically, simple, involving nothing more complicated than the return of the bride-price to the aggrieved husband. But in fact the dice are heavily loaded against the husband. In the 586

[1] Godefroy, 1, 1933, pp. 125-6.

[2] See p. 178.